

Young People's Societies

THE HILL DIFFICULTY.

Topic for Sunday, June 20: Pilgrim's Progress Series VI. The Hill Difficulty. Romans 7: 14-25; 2 Corinthians 6: 1-10.

Daily Readings.

Monday: Strength for all tasks. Isaiah 49: 8-11.
 Tuesday: David's Hill Difficulty. 1 Samuel 17: 32-51.
 Wednesday: The dangers of slackness. Rev. 2: 1-7.
 Thursday: A call to awake. Romans 13: 11-14.
 Friday: The victor. 1 John 5: 1-5; Revelation 3: 12.
 Saturday: Retracing our steps. Numbers 14: 26-35.

John Bunyan's grasp of the Christian's conditions could have come only of rich personal experience.

Every step along the pilgrim's way, in his allegory, reproduces phases in the Christian life through which every believer has passed.

There are not only lions in the way to affright, but hills of difficulty which are hard to surmount, and which we would fain get around.

These hills, however, must be gone over if we would keep in the straight path. Happily for us there are breathing spots on almost all of them, where we may pause and rest.

There is a spring at the bottom where the climber may refresh himself and gather strength for the task before him. He should drink deeply of its waters ere he addresses himself to the work.

The roll will be a great comfort to him in the arduous climb. It will assure him that as his day so shall be his strength, and that he will be able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him.

The attack upon the Hill Difficulty may be made in arduous at the first, one must not be discouraged, however, if from "running" he gets down to mere "going," and from "going" is forced to his knees to clambering.

Those who try to avoid this hill fall into evil and destruction. There is only one way, and the heavenly pilgrim must follow it no matter what it cuts through or passes over. This is the way; walk ye in it. "I am the way."

God places refreshment for his people along the most difficult path. It is never a loss to stop and take it, but if we fall asleep, in unconsciousness of duty, we shall have to pay the penalty. Our roll may slip out of our hands.

Hill-sides are hard to climb, but hill-tops are glorious view-points. The panorama which is seen from the summits repays one for the toil of the ascent. New views and unexpected glories are opened to our enraptured vision. They are well worth the hard climb.

The best things are never the easiest secured. The rarest gems do not lie on the surface. The virgin gold is found in the deepest mines. The award comes after the contest, the laurel after the race—else would they not be prized. In the world ye shall have tribulation.

In our up-hill efforts the trouble with us is that we do not ask Christ to go along and help us. We are not on our knees enough. We are trusting to our own ability or our own spiritual momentum. "Lean not to thine own understanding." "Trust in the Lord and do good." "They that fear the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles."

Profit by other men's experience, but do your own thinking and live your own life.

All men, if they work not as in a great Taskmaster's eye, will work wrong.—Carlyle.

Hope both expects and desires; therefore it gives courage and pleasure.

Prayer Meeting

WORSHIPPING ONLY GOD.

Week Beginning June 13. Col. 2: 18-23. ... Col. 2: 18-23.

The tendency to substitute something for the worship of the one true and living God has always been apparent. Its appearance and its persistency in the very presence of the apostle's ministry elicited some of his clearest and most vigorous testimony. Certain teachers assumed an attitude of extreme humility, teaching that lowly humanity should invoke the mediation of angels rather than come boldly to the throne of grace. It was a clear case of teaching for commandments the doctrines of men. It has had its counterpart in all subsequent ages in the religious homage that is paid to saints and angels and images graven by art and man's device. Such worship is the product of religious fancy and superstition. The source of this tendency is to be found in the aversion of the natural heart to vital godliness. And the true attitude of the worshipper is that, while assuming "a voluntary humility" he is "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

The attitude of true worship is that of recognizing the supreme headship of Christ, of whom believers are members. These constitute his body. They are bound together in unity with him. Their common vitality is derived from him, and inasmuch as they are united to him vitally, they increase, not by the processes of natural growth, either intellectual or moral, but "with the increase of God."

Natural shrinking from spiritual worship tempts men to be subject to ordinances "which are to perish with the using," because they are "after the commandments and doctrines of men." There is opportunity for vainglory if the worshipper invents his own methods of worship. They have a "show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body." The observer will say, "Behold how impressive the ordinance is and how contrite is he who emerges in it—a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility."

Now all such inventions are offensive to God. They partake of the essential character of idolatry. There is one Mediator for guilty men. The mediation of saints and angels is a mockery. God wants us to approach him directly through Christ. He tells us to seek his face, to call upon him, to ask of him and to worship him in spirit and in truth. He abhors formalism which is an evasion of spiritual worship.

We should cultivate the realization that God is immediately accessible to us, that in his own person he is in contact with our individual lives. We should be assured that there is none other who will hear us so readily, or sympathize with us so sincerely, or respond to our appeal so promptly, or minister to us so effectually. Happy will it be for us if we can increasingly grow into the idea of the abiding companionship of Christ—that there is no need which he can not supply, that there is no concern of life in which we may not invoke his sympathy and no care or service in which we may not expect his interest and help.

Let us remember that God is glorified by our worship and that he will not give his honor to another. He is pleased with our petitions and confessions as well as with our praises. It is his delight and his glory to nourish in our hearts those graces which are the gifts of his Spirit and which are cultivated by means of our devotion to him. The soul is made for communion with him whose image it bears. Nothing is more normal than that the redeemed soul should pay its devotions to its Redeemer. The life that is rescued from despair should delight in glorifying its rescuer, especially when the rescuer endows that life with qualities like his own and brings it into union with himself.